

How to Support Student Learning at Home

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Parents, families and home guardians play a critical role in learning at home. Because no two families are alike, families can support their children in a variety of ways.



Student, family and community physical, mental and emotional well-being are most important! As schools close and the news cycle is dominated by information about COVID-19, it may be frightening or confusing to children. Take care of your child's emotional and health needs during this time. Do not neglect your own needs, and reach out to available community networks and resources.

Home-based learning is unique and should not try to re-create school. Trying to support school-like learning in a home setting may frustrate families without leading to real and lasting learning. Instead, work with your child to have meaningful learning experiences that connect to your home lives, interests and identities. Some everyday activities that can promote meaningful learning could include cooking, baking, cleaning, reading together, building, painting and drawing, and taking a walk outside your home.

Use technology in smart ways. Meaningful learning can happen with or without devices or access to the internet. If you have access to the internet and a device students can use, technology and internet access can help students dive into learning at home. People learn best when they can figure things out together. Consider using devices and internet access to help learners find information they can use to figure something out, to make connections with others to build ideas and get feedback, to share their thinking and to stay socially connected with their peers.



Actions to Take

- ❑ **Model the Learning Process.** You don't have to be an expert in all content areas! One of the most supportive things you can do is to be a partner in your child's activities, investigations and thinking. Think out loud or [describe what you are doing as you do it](#), whether it is fixing something, planning a balanced meal, taking care of pets or doing other household activities.
- ❑ **Be a Thought Partner and Talk.** Support your children's reasoning by talking with them about their learning. You can ask your child questions such as "What do you notice? What do you wonder? Why do you think that's happening? What can you teach me about this?" Let your learners bounce ideas off of you. Remember, you don't need to know the answer; just help them surface current understanding, deepen their thinking and identify and figure out next steps to figure out more.
- ❑ **Focus on Learning in Everyday Life.** Many daily activities you regularly do can open up all sorts of questions that may lead to your children making sense of something they observe in the world and solving problems they encounter.
- ❑ **Connect Learning to Your Work or That of Your Family.** There may be many ways to engage your child as part of your own work that can contribute to meaningful learning. In your work or that of another family member, how do you find the answers to your questions? How do you communicate techniques, processes or ideas? What problems or challenges might you face? Share your work and allow your child to think and work with you in a meaningful, career-related context.
- ❑ **Build from the Content-related Interests of Your Children.** You know your children; consider whether they have personal, family or community interests that they do not always get to pursue in school and let them do a project related to that interest. Think about challenges facing your community, ideas or activities your child is passionate about or even ideas that have come from previous experiences. Learning is everywhere!
- ❑ **Learning Should Attend to the Physical, Mental and Emotional Needs of Your Children.** Work with your child to [manage healthy lengths of time spent in learning](#). Together, discuss and encourage healthful nutritional habits, physical activity and the amount of sleep needed for optimal learning to occur. Additionally, promote activities that encourage your children to discuss how they are feeling and attend to their [emotions](#).
- ❑ **Don't Stress about Creating a Perfect Homeschool Experience.** This situation is stressful and might be scary for your child and your family. Learning happens all the time—when we are gardening, building the best fort we can, making art, reading novels, writing stories, playing games and taking a walk outside. Engage your child in activities you love doing together, and explore what you can learn through those experiences. Your family might even look back on this time as some of the most meaningful learning experiences!



Students: How can you continue learning at home?

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You do not stop learning when you leave the classroom. Learning is all around us, including at home! You can continue to explore the world around you, understand natural phenomena (things that make you wonder) and solve problems from your own home.

Don't Forget!

- **Your physical and emotional well-being are most important.** Take care of yourself by practicing healthy habits, and do not be afraid to ask adults for information or support. Don't stress too much! Learning at home might be really new for you. Remember that a lot of people are feeling this way too. Do your best and explore what matters to you. We will all figure it out together!
- **Explore things that matter to you.** Is there something you've always wondered about—maybe why something happens the way it does, or a problem you want to solve? What do you already know about this? What does your family know? What are the next steps you might take to figure this out? Be creative! You can use your experiences to work on something you really care about.
- **Learning at home is a unique opportunity.** Learning at home and learning at school are different. At home, you can work with your family. You can connect learning to your home life and interests. This is an opportunity to explore something that really matters to you!
- **Set some goals for your own learning.** Setting learning goals can help us make a plan to be successful. Think about something you would like to learn, understand or solve to set realistic and relevant goals.
- **Reflect on your own learning.** One of the most important ways we build our understanding is by reflecting on *what* we are learning and *how* we are learning it. A phone call, text, email or video chat—or even connecting on social media—could work if you can't sit down and talk with others in the same room. People learn best by talking and thinking with each other. When you finish your work for the day, think about these questions:
 - What were some of the most challenging moments, and what made them so difficult?
 - What is the most important thing I learned, and what made it so meaningful?
 - Why was this project important to me, my family or my community?
 - How did this work move me toward my learning goals?